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HECB gets \$1 million federal grant for teacher, principal training

OLYMPIA - The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) has been awarded a \$1 million federal grant to help public school teachers and principals improve their classroom and leadership skills. The grant is part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which is designed to provide all children with a fair, equal and significant opportunity to get a high-quality education.

The Act, passed in 2001, reauthorizes and amends federal education programs established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The new law stresses accountability, flexibility, research-based education and parent options.

“Giving teachers and principals more opportunities to improve their skills and grow will ultimately help our children learn more,” said Gov. Gary Locke. “It’s a win-win for education in Washington.”

The Professional Development Partnership Grants must use research-based strategies to train practicing teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals and principals. The goal is to raise student achievement in the core academic subjects and to ensure that every child has the opportunity for a high-quality education. These partnership grants replace the Eisenhower Partnership Grants that had been administered previously by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its partners in the K-12 and higher education systems, the HECB will distribute nearly \$1 million in competitive grants for professional development activities. Activities include:

- Training in core academic subjects for teachers and paraprofessionals;
- Instructional leadership skills for principals; and
- Technical assistance to K-12 schools in using state academic content, achievement standards and assessments to improve teaching and learning.

To be eligible for grants, partnerships must include a college of education, a school of arts and sciences, and a high-need K-12 school. These schools will receive

priority. Other groups, such as nonprofit educational organizations, other higher education institutions, nonprofit cultural organizations, early childhood programs, teacher or principal organizations, or businesses also may be included in the partnerships.

The HECB will distribute a Request for Proposals (RFP) this fall and will make awards early next year.

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Questions and Answers

What are these grants for?

These grants are part of a large piece of federal legislation on education reform.

On Jan. 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This Act is a major change to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) established in 1965.

It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and is designed to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The ESEA Title II Part A subpart 3 replaces the existing Eisenhower Program, which is currently administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). With an appropriation for the Eisenhower Program of about \$1 million in federal funds, OSPI is supporting 22 professional development partnerships sponsored by public and private colleges of education. Historically, these partnerships have focused on improving math and science knowledge and skills for K-12 teachers. OSPI administers the program with an administrative allowance of about \$57,000 in federal funds.

What are they designed to do?

The grants are designed to provide programs to improve teacher and principal quality through a variety of professional developmental programs, as well as improve student academic achievement. The grants should also elevate quality instruction by providing access to effective professional development and meeting needs of low achievers.

Who is eligible to participate in the grant competition?

An eligible partnership must include:

- A public or private college of education
- A school of arts and sciences
- High-need K-12 public school
- Other agencies, associations, organizations and businesses

Who will be in charge of distributing the grant awards?

According to the ESEA, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in collaboration with OSPI, will administer the partnership grant program of nearly \$1.1 in federal funds.

What are the deadlines for submitting proposals?

The HECB anticipates having early 2003 as the deadline for submittals. Formal legal notice of the Request for Proposals will go out this fall in all major newspapers around the state.

Is there a maximum amount for one grant?

No. But the HECB must ensure that grant recipients are equitably distributed among all regions of the state. An advisory committee will determine grant limits.

What are the criteria for grant proposals?

Successful proposals must provide professional development activities first and foremost to low-performing schools:

- In core academic subjects for teachers and highly qualified paraprofessionals;
- In instructional leadership skills for principals; and
- To provide technical assistance to help schools and teachers use Washington's academic content and achievement standards and assessments to improve teaching and learning.

The professional development delivered through this program must focus on the specific needs of teachers, high-quality paraprofessionals and principals in high-need public K-12 schools. Criteria to improve content knowledge, teaching skills and instructional leadership skills must be based on scientific research.

How can I find out more information?

The U.S. Department of Education has a Web site with much more information on this and other programs under the No Child Left Behind Act. You can visit the Web site at [<http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/index.html>](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/next/index.html)

For more information on the grants, contact Elaine Jones, Higher Education Coordinating Board, via email at elainej@hecb.wa.gov <<mailto:elainej@hecb.wa.gov>>.